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No 220

1/-

THE ATLANTIC WALL



ALSO ON SALE NOW

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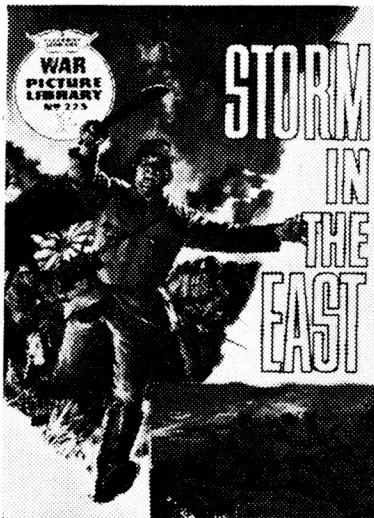
WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No. 221—H-HOUR

No. 223—STORM IN THE EAST



The panzers stood waiting to spring the steel jaws of the trap they had laid for the advancing British . . .



The Japanese hordes descended on Singapore, and he found himself caught in the web of the strange cult he had vowed to smash . . .

ALSO ON SALE NOW :—

No. 222—ROAD TO BERLIN

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** issues, on sale 6th January, are :—

No. 224—ADVANCE

No. 225—SURPRISE AND KILL

No. 226—ROUGH PASSAGE

No. 227—DEVIL'S ISLAND

THE ATLANTIC WALL

SOME MEN ARE BORN FIGHTERS. SOME ARE JUST GOOD SOLDIERS. BUT UNDER THE COMMAND OF A MAN LIKE BRIGADIER J.M.B. OLIPHANT - BIG JUMBO AS THEY CALLED HIM - ALL MEN GAINED A NEW STATURE THAT TURNED THEM INTO HEROES.



Chapter 1. Beachhead Inferno

IT WAS QUIET, DEAD QUIET, BUT BOUND FOR A BEACH CODE-NAMED "BARBICAN," THE FIRST WAVE OF THE 203 RD. BRIGADE KNEW THE STORM OF BATTLE MUST SOON BREAK.

REMEMBER, YOU CHAPS,
KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN
TILL WE HIT THE SHORE.
THEN GO LIKE THE DEVIL
FOR THE DUNES.



THE BRIGADIER DUMPED HIS STEEL HELMET WITH A CLANG, AND HAULED A BATTERED CAP FROM UNDER THE UNORTHODOX SWEATER HE WAS WEARING...

OLD 'BLOOD AND THUNDER'S' PUTTIN' ON HIS GO-TO-HELL HAT. IT WAS WITH HIM THROUGH DUNKIRK, CRETE, NORTH AFRICA, SICILY AND SALERNO. YOU'LL NEVER SEE HIM WITHOUT IT WHEN THE FUR BEGINS TO FLY!



FAR OUT TO SEA, WARSHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY STRUCK UP A THUNDEROUS OVERTURE — AND SALVOES OF SHELLS FLUTTERED OVERHEAD TO HAMMER DOWN ON ENEMY DEFENCES...



CONCRETE BASTIONS IN THE NAZIS' SYSTEM OF FORTIFICATIONS WERE SPLIT ASUNDER, BUT THE GERMANS STILL HAD GUNS LEFT TO FIGHT BACK WITH...

KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN, THE BRIG SAID, BUT LOOK AT 'IM! STANDIN' THERE AS IF HE DIDN'T GIVE TWO HOOTS FOR HIS OWN BLOOMIN' BONCE!

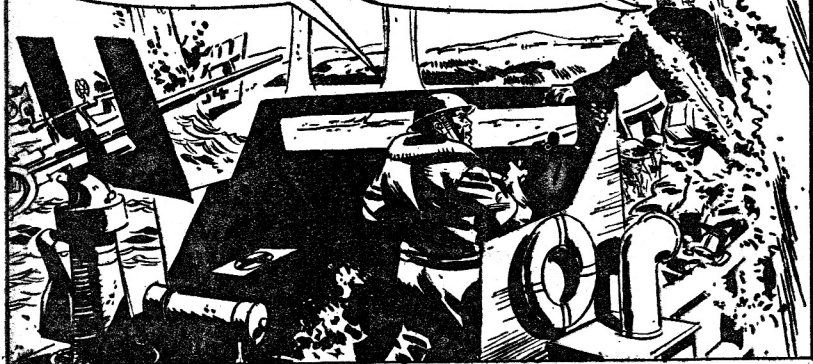


The Atlantic Wall

GERMAN ARTILLERY BELTED OUT FLAME AND STEEL AND TURNED THE OFFSHORE WATERS INTO A DEVIL'S BREW OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.

FOR PETE'S SAKE, SIR, WON'T YOU GET DOWN WITH THE REST OF YOUR PARTY? YOU'RE MY RESPONSIBILITY, YOU KNOW!

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY'S THIS LUMBERING WASH-TUB, SAILOR. KEEP YOUR MIND ON YOUR JOB, AND STOP WORRYING ABOUT ME!



THE ORDERLY LINE OF ASSAULT CRAFT IN TWO-O-THREE BRIGADE'S FIRST WAVE WAS TORN RAGGED. EVEN JUMBO OLIPHANT'S COMMAND VESSEL BEGAN TO YAW WILDLY...

WHAT THE BLAZES D'YOU THINK YOU'RE PLAYING AT? IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO DODGE THE JERRY GUNNERS BY DIPSY-DOODLING LIKE A WATER-SNAKE, FORGET IT!

I'M NOT ZIG-ZAGGING ON PURPOSE, SIR! THE RUDDER MUST HAVE TAKEN A KNOCK FROM THAT LAST SHELL... I CAN'T CONTROL HER AT ALL!



The Atlantic Wall

7

A PLAYTHING OF VAGRANT CURRENTS, LCA 134 STRAGGLED OFF-COURSE. THE BRIGADIER'S VOICE ROARED ABOVE THE BEDLAM OF THE BARRAGE...

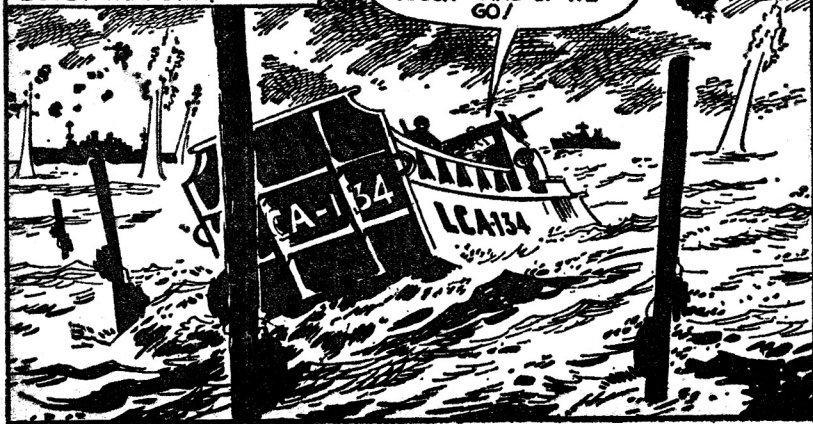
GET ME BACK INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF THE BATTLE! WHAT GOOD'S A BRIGADIER WITHOUT HIS BRIGADE? DO SOMETHING, CURSE YOU!



THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO, SIR! NOT UNTIL WE GET INTO SHALLOW WATER!

IN FIFTEEN MINUTES, THE LANDING-CRAFT ASSAULT WAS PLOUGHING PERILOUSLY THROUGH AN AREA THAT BRISTLED WITH MINED BOOBY TRAPS...

THOSE POSTS ARE COVERED WITH CHARGES OF EXPLOSIVE, SIR! A SCRAPE - THE MEREST TOUCH - AND UP WE GO!



The Atlantic Wall

BY SHEER LUCK THE BARGE ESCAPED DISASTER AND CRUNCHED FIRMLY INTO THE SAND. THE RAMP BEGAN TO DROP AND THE BRIGADIER MOVED FORWARD.



SLACK-JAWED, THE CREW OF A 50-MILLIMETRE GUN GAPED IN DISBELIEF AS THEY SAW A LONG-STRIDING FIGURE WITH A COUPLE OF WOLFHOUNDS STORM ASHORE.



YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO UNDERSTAND THEM. DUMMKOPF! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO KILL THEM! SCHNELL! GET TO WORK!

THE BRIGADIER WAS CLEAR OF THE RAMP WHEN
THE GUN IN THE DUNES FIRED...



LOOKING DOWN AT THE STILL FORM,
THE YOUNG SUBALTERN WAS
GRIPPED BY INDECISION...



The Atlantic Wall

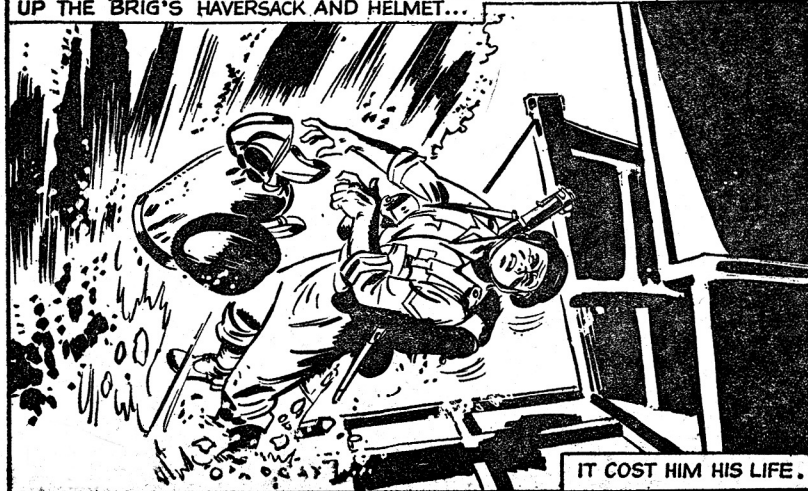
YOUNG SECOND-LIEUTENANT MARSHALL WAS IN CHARGE OF BRIGADE H.Q.'S DEFENCE PLATOON. HE RECOVERED HIMSELF QUICKLY AND BECAME RIGOROUSLY "REGIMENTAL".



AT THAT INSTANT, ANOTHER 50-MILLIMETRE SHELL SCREAMED INTO THE WATER'S EDGE...



A THIRD SHELL EXPLODED AS LANCE-CORPORAL SUMNER, THE BRIGADIER'S BATMAN, WAS STUMBLING DOWN THE RAMP. HE HAD STOPPED TO GATHER UP THE BRIG'S HAVERSACK AND HELMET...



MEANTIME, MARSHALL AND THE MEN OF THE DEFENCE PLATOON WERE NEARING THE EDGE OF THE LINE OF SAND DUNES. AN EYE-SEARING BLAST COINCIDED WITH THEIR ARRIVAL THERE.



GET DOWN, MEN!
BREN GUNNERS AND
RIFLEMEN, AWAIT MY
FIRE-ORDER!

NUMBERS ONE, TWO AND THREE
SECTIONS ... SIGHTS DOWN ... AT
ENEMY ARTILLERY-POSITION TO
YOUR FRONT, THREE
ROUNDS RAPID-FIRE!



GUSTS OF LEAD RAKED THE LIP OF
THE HOLLOW WHERE THE NAZI GUN
WAS SITED, BUT FAILED TO
SILENCE THE WEAPON.

FOR ALL WE KNOW, ENEMY TROOPS
MAY BE DUG-IN TO RIGHT AND LEFT.
WE'LL STAY PUT TILL
I CAN SIZE UP THE
SITUATION AND FORM
A PLAN!



THE LINE HELD FAST, WAITING FOR MARSHALL TO WRACK HIS BRAINS.
THEN CAME AN EXCITED SHOUT...



IT WAS THE BRIGADIER, SURE ENOUGH... WORKING A FLANKER THAT ENDED
IN A BERSERK, BELLOWING RUSH...





THE BRIGADIER'S ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED BY A SHOUT FROM THE NAVAL SUB-LIEUTENANT...

FIRST TIME UNDER FIRE, AND I PROVE I'M A BLESSED FAILURE—IN FULL VIEW OF THE BRIG, TOO! FROM NOW ON, HE'LL NEVER HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE IN ME!



WHAT IS IT, MISTER LAWFORD?

BANCHARD AND I HAVE MANAGED TO REPAIR THE STEERING-GEAR, SIR. WE CAN REVERSE FROM HERE AND TAKE YOU TO BARBICAN BEACH!



THE BRIGADIER GRUNTED HIS SATISFACTION. BEFORE LONG, LCA 134 WAS HEADING AT FULL SPEED FOR ITS APPOINTED BEACHHEAD...

GET ME TO BARBICAN INSIDE FIVE MINUTES, LAWFORD, AND I'LL SEE YOU GET PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT!



The Atlantic Wall

BUT THERE WAS TO BE NO PROMOTION FOR LAWFORD. AS LCA 134 RAN PARALLEL WITH THE COAST, AN ISOLATED SPANDAU LASHED OUT FROM A SPIT OF LAND.



THE UNLUCKY SUB-LIEUTENANT CRUMPLED LIFELESSLY, AS DID HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND, BANCHARD.

DOES ANYONE DOWN THERE KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THIS TUB?



OLIPHANT'S GLANCE FASTENED BRIEFLY ON ONE OF THE REMAINING OFFICERS OF HIS BRIGADE HQ — CAPTAIN MOORE BY NAME, SECONDED FROM THE ROYAL ENGINEERS.





The Atlantic Wall

ON THE HOSTILE SHORE, THE SPANDAU'S CHATTER WAS CUT SHORT BY THE SCATHING FIRE-POWER OF THREE BRENS AND THE QUICK-FIRER.

TEUFEL! I'M STAYING UNDER COVER! KARL AND ERNST WOULD STILL BE ALIVE IF THEY'D DONE THE SAME!



LCA 134 DREW ABREAST OF THE BRIGADE LANDING-ZONE. BARBICAN WAS BOILING LIKE A CAULDRON WITH SMOKE AND FUMES AND THE LURID FLASHES OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE.



BEFORE THE CRAFT HAD STOPPED, THE RAMP WAS DOWN AND BRIGADIER OLIPHANT'S MEN RAN HELL-FOR-LEATHER UP THE BEACH...



THE BRIGADIER MOVED FORWARD OVER A CRATERED FORESHORE, AND THROUGH A FOG OF CORDITE. THE FIRST LIVING MAN HE SAW WAS A BATTALION COMMANDER...



IT WAS A GRIM PICTURE OF DESPERATE LOSSES IN MEN, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES. THE DOMINATING FEATURE OF IT ALL WAS THE PULVERISING BOMBARDMENT.

...THE NAVY GUNNERS CAN'T TOUCH THE JERRY ARTILLERY THAT'S PINNING US DOWN, SIR, AND THE R.A.F. BOYS ARE TIED UP ALONG THE COAST. WE'VE BEEN STOPPED COLD AND THE SAME GOES FOR ALL THE OTHER BATTALIONS ON THIS BEACH!



OLIPHANT STUCK OUT HIS JAW BELLIGERENTLY...

LOMAX, MY BRIGADE'S THE BEST IN THE BRITISH ARMY. I'LL STAND OR FALL BY THAT. I PESTERED THE TOP BRASS TO GIVE ME BARBICAN, THE TOUGHEST NUT OF ALL—AND BY THUNDER, WE'RE GOING TO CRACK IT!

HOW, SIR? THAT'S THE QUESTION!



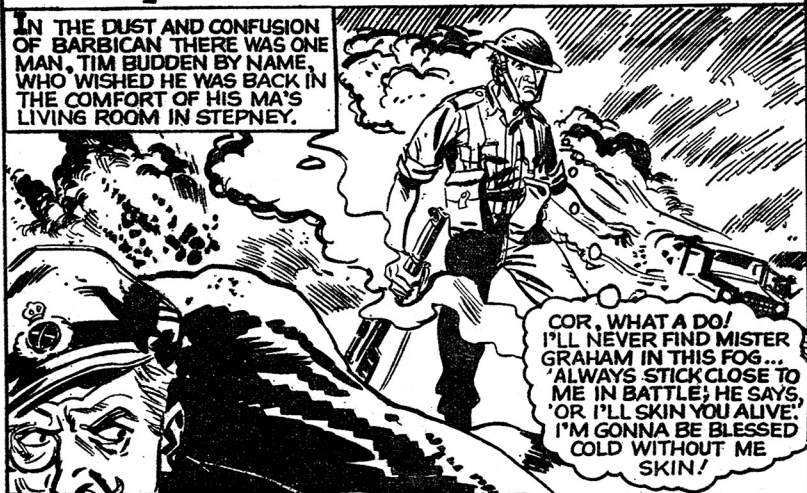
HOW, INDEED—WHEN THEY WERE HELD FAST BY THE BLUDGEON—BLOWS OF BIG-CALIBRE HOWITZERS, CUNNINGLY SITED MILES INLAND.

HERR HAUPTMANN, THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER ATTEMPT BY THE BRITISH TO ADVANCE FROM THE TARGET AREA. LEUTNANT HEFFNER SUGGESTS A DECREASE IN THE RATE OF FIRE!



Chapter 2. The Brave Batman

IN THE DUST AND CONFUSION OF BARBICAN THERE WAS ONE MAN, TIM BUDDEN BY NAME, WHO WISHED HE WAS BACK IN THE COMFORT OF HIS MA'S LIVING ROOM IN STEPNEY.



A FOGHORN VOICE BOOMED AT TIM BUDDEN: HE JUMPED LIKE A PLUCKED FIDDLE-STRING...



BEFORE BUDDEN COULD SAY ANYTHING,
JUMBO OLIPHANT WENT ON...

SO'S MY BATMAN, BUDDEN.
YOU CAN TAKE HIS PLACE. THE
FIRST THING I WANT YOU TO
DO IS TO GET SOME FOOD
FOR MY WOLFHOUNDS.
THEY MUST BE FAMISHED.

THE BRIGADIER'S
BATMAN! ME?



NEXT MOMENT, THE TWO
GREAT WOLFHOUNDS SPRANG
AT TIM, BAYING A WELCOME.

OOER/
NO-NO...!



HE FELL FLAT ON HIS BACK, SCARED THAT THE HUNGRY WOLFHOUNDS WERE ABOUT TO MAKE A MEAL OF HIM. BUT THEY ONLY LICKED HIS FACE ENTHUSIASTICALLY...

WELL, I'LL BE DASHED! THEY'VE TAKEN TO YOU, LAD! NEVER SEEN 'EM MAKE A FUSS OF ANYBODY BEFORE, EXCEPT ME.



THE BRIGADIER CALLED THEM OFF - REPEATED HIS ORDER TO FETCH FOOD FOR THEM - AND TURNED TO LOMAX. TIM PIPED UP, HESITANTLY...

SIR, WHERE'LL I FIND GRUB?

HOW THE DEVIL SHOULD I KNOW WHERE THE FOOD IS? USE YOUR COMMON SENSE, LAD!



The Atlantic Wall

TIM COULD HAVE TOLD JUMBO NONE OF THE BRIGADE'S RATIONS HAD EVER REACHED SHORE, BUT HE KEPT QUIET...

I DAREN'T INTERRUPT THE BRIGADIER AGAIN. HE'D JUMP DOWN MY BLINKING THROAT!



THEN AN IDEA OCCURRED TO THE SAWN-OFF SOLDIER-SERVANT, THOUGH IT TOOK A WHILE TO SCREW UP HIS COURAGE TO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE...

BETTER TAKE THIS STEN WITH ME—MIGHT BE HANDIER THAN MY LEE-ENFIELD.



HE MOVED OFF THROUGH THE BATTLE HAZE, NOT RELISHING THE PROSPECT AHEAD OF HIM. AT ALL...

WHERE THE HECK ARE YOU BOUND FOR, TINY?

A DESERTED VILLAGE. I WAS IN IT BEFORE THE JERRIES PITCHED INTO US WITH THEIR BARRAGE AND DROVE US BACK TO THE BEACH. I'VE GOT TO GET SOME GRUB FOR THE BRIG'S DOGS!



THE HARASSING FIRE OF THE ENEMY'S ARTILLERY WAS STILL POUNDING DOWN AND FIXED LINES OF ENEMY SPANDAU SCoured THE DUNES.

I WISH I WAS A BLOOMIN' HERO— BUT I AIN'T, AND THAT'S A FACT! I'M S-SCARED STIFF!



BUT TIM WAS EVEN MORE SCARED OF FAILING BLOOD AND THUNDER. BEING BATMAN TO A SUBALTERN HAD BEEN ORDEAL ENOUGH — BUT BATMAN TO A BRIGADIER!

COR, JUS' MY LUCK! THE HAMLET'S BEEN CLOBERBERED. IT'S BLAZIN' LIKE A BLOOMIN' BONFIRE! NO GRUB THERE!



The Atlantic Wall

THEN TIM THOUGHT OF VILLEBRUN, THE BRIGADE'S MAIN OBJECTIVE...

THIS MUST BE THE ROAD TO VILLEBRUN, OR WHATEVER THE FROGS CALL IT. THERE'S BOUND TO BE A SHOP OR TWO THERE. IF I USE THIS DITCH, I'LL NEVER BE SPOTTED!



HE SQUEEZED HIMSELF INTO THE DITCH AND WORKED HIS WAY ALONG IT. HE HAD GONE A HUNDRED YARDS OR SO WHEN HE RAISED HIS HEAD - AND YELPED WITH TERROR!



OH, MY GOSH!

HIS EYES TRAVELLED UP FROM THE HOBNAILED JACKBOOTS TO BLUE-JOWLED FACES, THE FACES OF TWO MASSIVE NAZIS WHO WERE GRINNING DOWN AT HIM MALIGNANTLY...



THUS FAR, LITTLE ONE - AND NO FARTHER!

AN ELECTRIFYING IMPULSE SEEMED TO JOLT THROUGH TIM'S BRAIN. IT GALVANISED HIM INTO FRANTIC ACTION JUST AS THE GERMANS' FINGERS TIGHTENED ON THEIR RIFLE TRIGGERS.

STONE THE CROWS! THAT WAS CLOSE!



THE STEN GUN CUT THE NAZIS DOWN, TOPPLING THEM OVER TO LAND ON TOP OF THE PALPITATING BATMAN...



The Atlantic Wall

HE MANAGED TO WRIGGLE FROM UNDER THEM, HOWEVER, AND SCRAMBLED ALONG THE DITCH WITHOUT ENCOUNTERING ANY MORE ENEMY SOLDIERS...



HE FOUND THE SHOP UNATTENDED AND WAS OBLIGED TO HELP HIMSELF. SCURRYING OUT WITH A JOINT OF MEAT, HE RAN SLAP INTO A GERMAN WHO WAS HIS COUNTERPART IN SIZE.



THE LITTLE GERMAN THREW DOWN HIS SCHMEISSER, STUCK UP HIS HANDS AND YELLED FOR MERCY...



TIM PUSHED THE MAN ASIDE AND BOLTED FOR IT, LEAVING THE NAZI GAWKING.



The Atlantic Wall

THE BATMAN SKIPPED ROUND A BEND IN THE ROAD. OUT OF SIGHT OF VILLEDUPIN, HE TOOK TO THE DITCH AGAIN. NOT LONG AFTERWARDS, HE HEARD VOICES ...

ONCE MORE THEY ARE ADVANCING! TELEPHONE THE BATTERY COMMANDER!

JAWOHL, HERR LEUTNANT!



FROM A DISTANCE THAT HUT COULD PASS FOR SOME KIND OF STORE-SHED, BUT IT'S MADE OF CONCRETE! IT'S PROBABLY A COMMAND-POST!



TIM RESUMED HIS RETURN JOURNEY. SUDDENLY, CLOSE AT HAND, A MACHINE GUN YAMMERED...

EEK!
ALL THIS FOR
THOSE BLINKIN'
DOGS!



NO SOONER HAD HE CRAWLED PAST, THAN A FLOCK OF SHELLS ROARED DOWN WITH THE NOISE OF AN EXPRESS-TRAIN. VIOLENT CONCUSSIONS JARRED THE GROUND...

LUMME! THE GERMANS
ARE STARTING UP ANOTHER
BARRAGE - AND IT'S BETWEEN
ME AND THE BEACH. BUT I'VE
GOT TO GO THROUGH IT -
I CAN'T STAY HERE!



The Atlantic Wall

ONCOMING BRITISH TROOPS WERE CAUGHT IN A PROLONGED AND DEVASTATING INFERNO - ONE THAT THREATENED UTTER ANNIHILATION.

SIR, A MESSAGE FROM THE C.O. - WE'RE TO WITHDRAW!

ALL RIGHT, LADS, PULL BACK! STEADY, NOW! WE'LL DO IT IN GOOD ORDER!



AS THE MEN OF THE BRIGADE RETREATED TO THE BEACH, A RATHER DISHEVELLED TIM BUDDEN LOCATED THE BRIGADIER...

THE BOCHE GUNNERS HAVE GOT OUR MEASURE. WE MAKE A MOVE, AND STRAIGHT AWAY THEY LOWER THE BOOM ON US WITH DEADLY ACCURACY. IT HAPPENS EVERY TIME.

THEY MUST HAVE A FIRST-RATE OBSERVATION POST SOMEWHERE!



BRIGADIER OLIPHANT CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE APPROACHING BATMAN AND THE JOINT OF MEAT...

SEEN 'AS HOW THE LANDING-CRAFT WITH THE RATIONS WAS SUNK, SIR, I HAD TO GO TO VILLEBRUN FOR THE GRUB FOR THE DOGS!

YOU DID WHAT? YOU WENT TO VILLEBRUN?



THE BRIGADIER COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE HIS EARS...

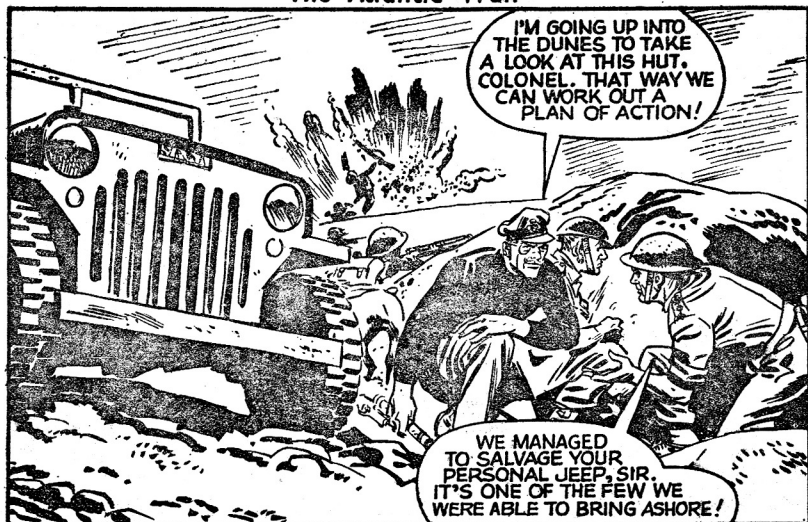
I BORROWED YOUR STEN, SIR, I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND. I DUNNO WHAT I'D HAVE DONE WITHOUT IT!



QUESTIONED, TIM WENT INTO DETAILS. HE MENTIONED THE STONE HUT BY THE VILLEBRUN ROAD - NOT THAT HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT. BUT THE BRIGADIER DID!

BUDDEN, YOU DON'T KNOW IT, BUT YOU'RE A MARVEL! IT'S PLAIN THE JERRY YOU SAW WITH THE FIELD GLASSES WAS AN ARTILLERY F.O.O. - A FORWARD-OBSERVATION-OFFICER!



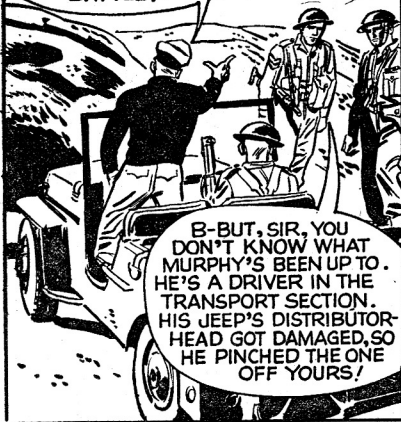


AMID THE VOLLEY OF CURSES FROM JUMBO AND THE FURY OF THE ENEMY BOMBARDMENT, A LONE CORPORAL STEPPED UP AND SPOKE TO LOMAX IN A HUSHED VOICE...



COLONEL LOMAX WAS CUT SHORT - BY AN INFURIATED OUTBURST FROM THE BRIGADIER...

DID YOU SAY YOU'D PUT A MAN ON A CHARGE, CORPORAL? IS THAT ALL YOU CAN FIND TO DO IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE?



FOR A FEW SECONDS, JUMBO OLIPHANT STARED AT CORPORAL FERRIS. FINALLY HE BIT OUT AN ORDER...



The Atlantic Wall

THICK-SET, BLACK-HAIRED, WITH GUN-METAL EYES AND A FACE THAT HAD BEEN LIBERALLY SCARRED IN BATTLE AND BRAWL. SUCH WAS PRIVATE MURPHY...



PRIVATE MURPHY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS OFFENCE IN A GRAVELLY VOICE. THERE WAS NO TRACE OF APOLOGY IN IT...

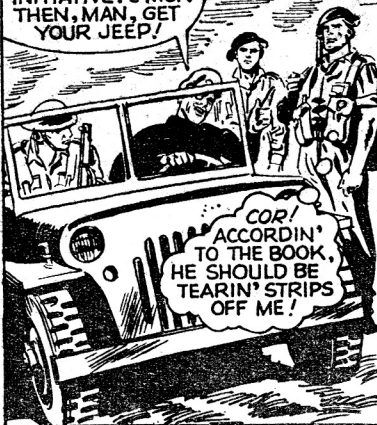
YES, SIR. I TOOK IT. NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D NEED IT WHEN YOUR L.C.A. WENT ADRIFT!

HE'S SWIPED BITS AND PIECES OFF OTHER TRANSPORT, SIR. HIS JEEP IS THE ONLY RUNNER ON THE WHOLE BEACH.



THE SMUG CORPORAL FERRIS WAITED FOR BRIGADIER OLIPHANT TO EXPLODE IN ANGER — BUT WAITED IN VAIN...

WELL DONE, MURPHY! YOU'VE SHOWN GREAT INITIATIVE. C'MON THEN, MAN, GET YOUR JEEP!



LESS THAN A MINUTE LATER, MURPHY WAS DRIVING THE BRIGADE COMMANDER AND TIM BUDDEN UP THE SHELL-BLASTED BEACH.

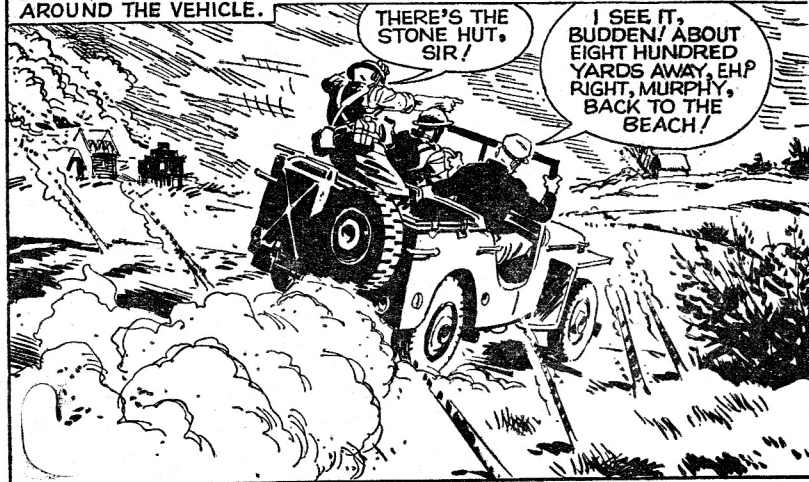
THAT'S IT, M'LAD.
FOOT HARD DOWN TILL
WE'RE THROUGH THE
SMOKE AND CAN GET
A CLEAR VIEW!



THE JEEP BOUNCED OVER THE DUNES AND BURST OUT OF THE BATTLE FOG. SPANDAUS CHATTERED WICKEDLY AND BULLETS WHIP-CRACKED ALL AROUND THE VEHICLE.

THERE'S THE
STONE HUT,
SIR!

I SEE IT,
BUDDEN! ABOUT
EIGHT HUNDRED
YARDS AWAY, EHP
RIGHT, MURPHY,
BACK TO THE
BEACH!



MURPHY SKIDDED THE JEEP INTO A HAIR-RAISING TURN-ABOUT, AND WITH HIS FOOT HARD DOWN ON THE THROTTLE MADE A RECORD-BREAKING DASH FOR THE BEACH.



PRIVATE MURPHY HAD A MOTTO: "NEVER VOLUNTEER". HE WOULD HAVE STUCK TO IT, TOO, IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR A NEW KIND OF SPIRIT THE BRIGADIER HAD STIRRED UP IN HIM...

EXCUSE ME, SIR. THE BEST WAY FOR A MAN TO GET CLOSE TO THAT O.P. WOULD BE TO BELT STRAIGHT ALONG THE VILLEBRUN ROAD. I'D BE WILLIN' TO HAVE A GO IN THIS HERE RATTLE-TRAP.



OLIPHANT GAVE THE "BAD HAT" OF LOMAX'S BATTALION A LONG, KEEN LOOK. THEN, WITH HIS USUAL SENSE OF FAIR PLAY, HE PICKED UP A PIECE OF CHALK... FROM THE BEACH ITSELF.

SOLDIER, IT'S HIGH TIME YOU REALISED YOU'VE BEEN WASTED AS A PRIVATE. WITH EFFECT FROM NOW, YOU'RE — SERGEANT MURPHY!

STONE THE CROWS!



MURPHY WAS STUNNED AT HIS SUDDEN PROMOTION, THEN HE REMEMBERED — CORPORAL FERRIS!

IF I HAD ANOTHER MAN WITH ME IT WOULD DOUBLE THE CHANCES OF CLOBBERING THE JERRY O.P. CAN I DETAIL SOMEBODY TO COME WITH ME?



FERRIS HEARD AND SAW THE GLEAM IN MURPHY'S EYE. INWARDLY SEETHING WITH CHAGRIN, HE STEPPED SMARTLY UP TO THE BRIGADIER...

SIR, THERE'S NO NEED FOR ANYBODY TO BE DETAILED BY MURPHY — ER, SARN'T MURPHY. I'LL STICK MY NECK OUT, TOO!



The Atlantic Wall

THE TWO RIVALS WASTED NO TIME IN LOADING A PIAT AND SOME AMMO ON TO THE JEEP AND THEN THEY SET OFF ON THEIR MISSION.

LET ME GET ONE THING CLEAR—SERGEANT! I AIN'T TAKIN' NO ORDERS FROM YOU AN' THAT'S CERTAIN!

WATCH YOURSELF, FERRIS, ME OL' MATE, OR YOU'LL BE ON A FIZZER SO FAST YOU WON'T KNOW WHAT 'IT YER!

FERRIS GROUND HIS TEETH TOGETHER IN RAGE, BUT SOON HE HAD TOO MUCH ON HIS MIND TO INDULGE IN THE LUXURY OF RESENTMENT.

YOU MUST'VE BEEN OUT OF YOUR TINY MIND, MURPHY, TO LET YOURSELF IN FOR THIS LARK! I'VE A MIND TO JUMP FOR IT AND LET YOU GO IT ALONE!

Chapter 3. Into the Fury

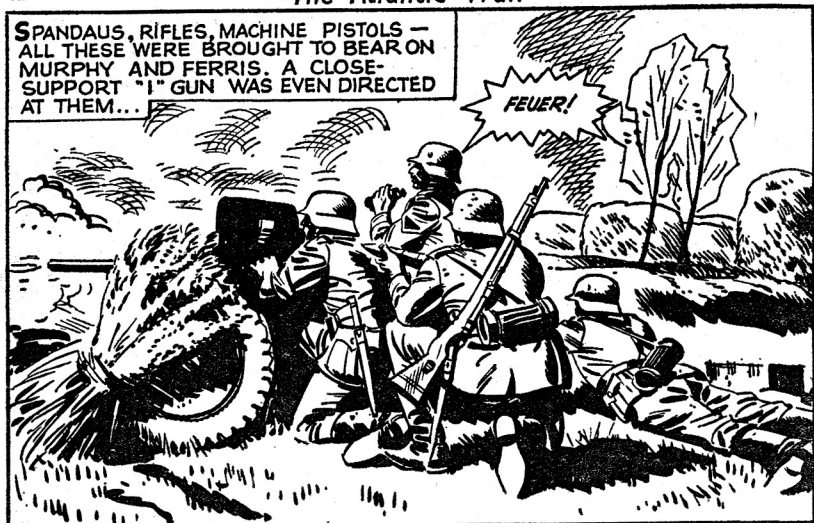
BUT FERRIS STAYED PUT AS THE JEEP HURTTLED ON TOWARDS THE VILLEBRUN ROAD THROUGH CONTINUOUS AND VENOMOUS GUSTS OF METAL.



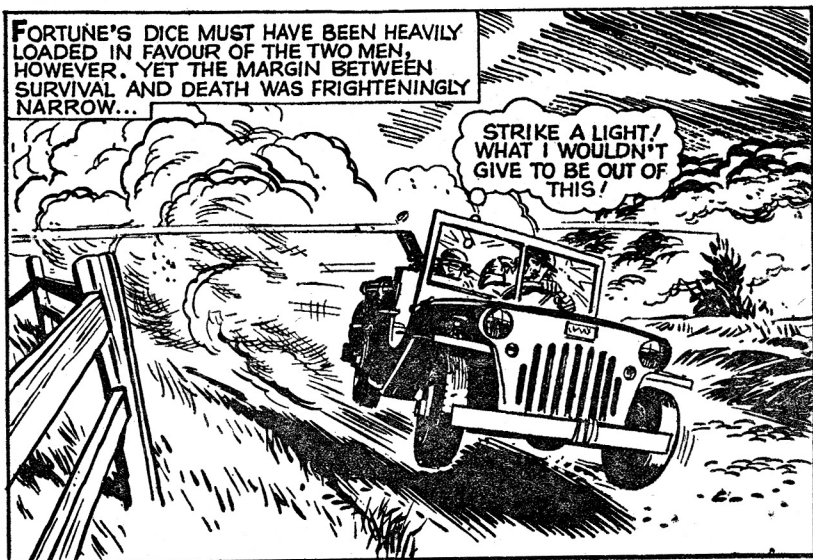
THE JEEP DIPPED INTO A SANDY GULLY AND WAS SAFE FOR THE MOMENT. BUT DIRECTLY IT REAPPEARED, IT WAS THE TARGET FOR A FUSILLADE OF NAZI LEAD...



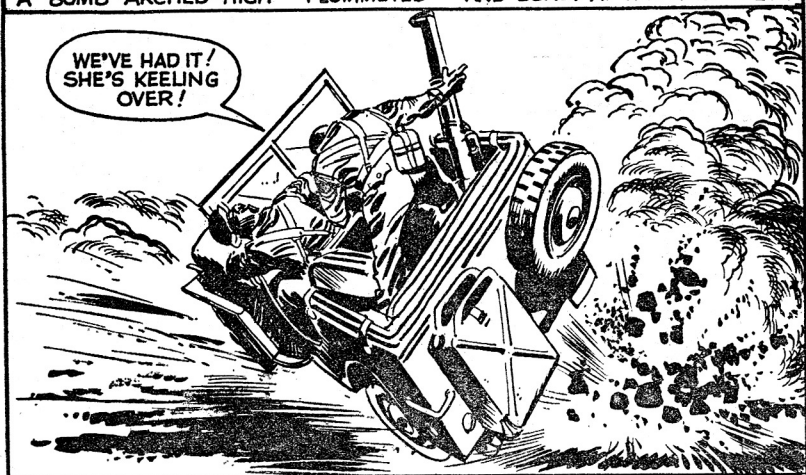
SPANDAUS, RIFLES, MACHINE PISTOLS — ALL THESE WERE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON MURPHY AND FERRIS. A CLOSE-SUPPORT "1" GUN WAS EVEN DIRECTED AT THEM...



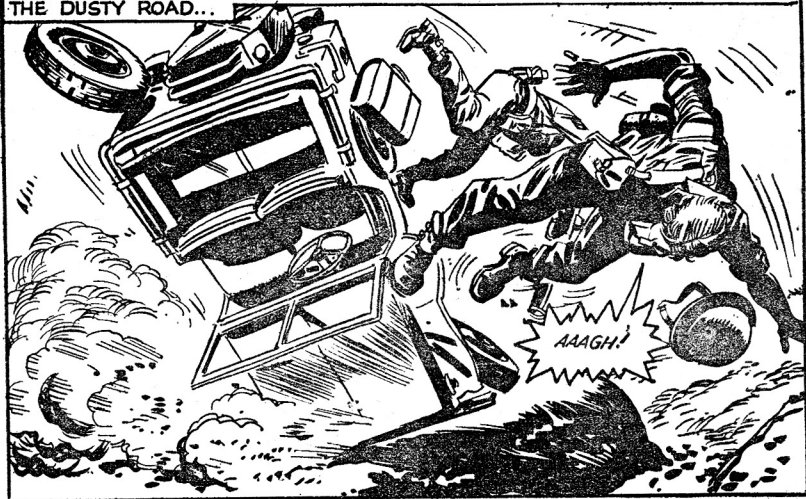
FORTUNE'S DICE MUST HAVE BEEN HEAVILY LOADED IN FAVOUR OF THE TWO MEN, HOWEVER. YET THE MARGIN BETWEEN SURVIVAL AND DEATH WAS FRIGHTENINGLY NARROW...



THEN AWAY TO THE RIGHT, A 50-MILMETRE MORTAR COUGHED WICKEDLY. A BOMB ARCHED HIGH — PLUMMETED — AND BURST AT THE ROADSIDE...



THE BLAST WHIPPED THE JEEP OUT OF MURPHY'S CONTROL. WITH AN EAR-SHATTERING CRASH, IT KEEOLED OVER, SLINGING ITS OCCUPANTS OUT ON TO THE DUSTY ROAD...



The Atlantic Wall

DAZED AND SHAKEN, MURPHY AND FERRIS HEARD THE CLATTER OF A SCHMEISSER AND THE BANG OF A MAUSER. BULLETS SMACKED INTO THE DIRT ALL AROUND THEM...



MURPHY LIFTED THE CUMBERSOME PIAT UP TO HIS SHOULDER AND TOOK CAREFUL AIM. AT THE VISION SLOT OF THE ENEMY OBSERVATION POST.



BUT MURPHY'S AIM WAS TOO HASTY AND THE BOMB EXPLODED SEVERAL FEET FROM THE SLIT.



IT WAS OBVIOUS TO MURPHY THAT FERRIS KNEW HOW TO HANDLE THE PIAT BY THE WAY HE SEEMED TO BLEND WITH THE ODDLY SHAPED WEAPON...



The Atlantic Wall

OPERATING AS A TEAM, THEY BRAVED A SQUALL OF BULLETS. THE PIAT LASHED OUT...



THE NEXT PIAT SHOT WAS "SPOT-ON": ITS BOMB ARROWED INTO THE CONCRETE HUT THROUGH THE VISION SLIT AND DETONATED AGAINST THE REAR WALL...



AFTER THE SHATTERING EXPLOSION, A DEATHLY QUIET SETTLED OVER THE AREA.



ANY CONCERN MURPHY MIGHT HAVE HAD WOULD HAVE BEEN DISPELLED IF HE COULD HAVE SEEN THE WAY JUMBO OLIPHANT WAS HANDLING HIS END...



VERY SOON, THE BATTERED REMNANTS OF 203 BRIGADE WERE CLIMBING TO THEIR FEET. FROM HIS VANTAGE-POINT, THE MONOCLED BRIGADIER SURVEYED THEM...



The Atlantic Wall

ALL AT ONCE HE STOOD UP IN FULL VIEW OF FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE. HE PAID NO HEED TO ENEMY BULLETS...

STEP OUT, LADS / WE'VE TAKEN ALL WE'RE GOING TO FROM THE PERISHIN' BOCHES / THIS IS WHERE WE HIT 'EM FOR SIX!



HIS VOICE HAD THE CARRYING-POWER OF A BUGLE — AND THE RALLYING EFFECT OF A WHOLE MILITARY BAND. MEN SQUARED THEIR SHOULDERS AT THE VERY SIGHT AND SOUND OF HIM...

IT'S THE BRIGADIER! IT'S JUMBO OLIPHANT!



GOOD OLD BLOOD AND THUNDER!

OLIPHANT DIRECTED BUDDEN TO KEEP THE WOLFHOUNDS TO THE REAR. THEN HE DOUBLED INLAND, TO RIGHT AND LEFT OF HIM THERE WAS A RESPONSIVE SURGE OF KHAKI...

BEST FOOT FORWARD! FIRST STOP—VILLEBRUN!



THREE-INCH MORTARS PUMPED BOMBS ON TO THE NAZI TRENCH-SYSTEM, BUT THE GERMANS WERE COUNTER-PUNCHING WITH THEIR OWN BARRAGE...



THE BRIGADIER WAS UP-ENDED BY A BUFFETING SHOCK-WAVE, BUT ROSE UNHARMED, MINUS HIS GOLD-RIMMED MONOCLE...



The Atlantic Wall

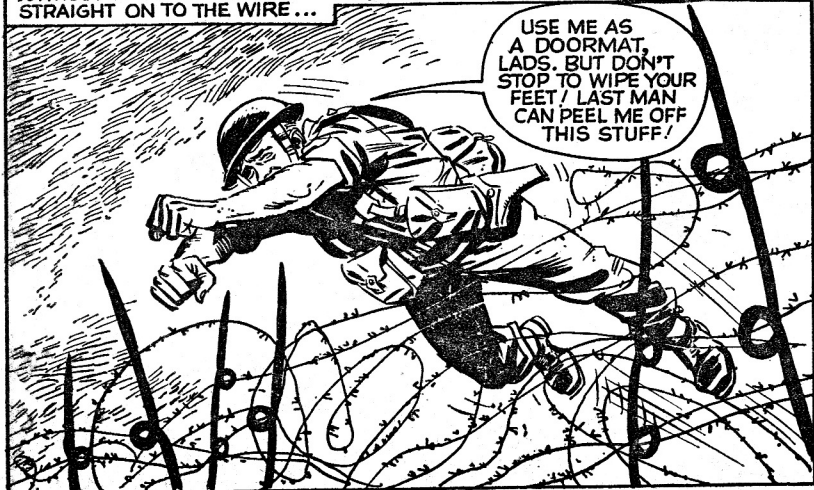
THE ENEMY MORTARS FAILED TO STEM THE ATTACK. WITH THE BOCHE ARTILLERY SILENT, THE BRITISH WON THEIR WAY TO THE EDGE OF THE GERMAN DEFENSIVE AREA...



THE CONCERTINA-WIRE DEFENCES HELD UP A PLATOON ON OLIPHANT'S LEFT. THE PLATOON WAS YOUNG MARSHALL'S AND IT CAME UNDER SCOURGING FIRE ...



WITHOUT A THOUGHT FOR HIMSELF, MARSHALL THREW HIMSELF FORWARD, STRAIGHT ON TO THE WIRE ...



The Atlantic Wall

THE MEN OF MARSHALL'S PLATOON STARTED TO BRIDGE THE OBSTRUCTION BY MEANS OF HIS PROSTRATE BODY. NOT ALL OF THEM SUCCEEDED...



NEVERTHELESS THE MAJORITY OF THEM CROSSED THE BARBED HAZARD WITHOUT A HITCH AND THE HINDMOST HELPED THE SECOND-LIEUTENANT TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF...



GRENADES RAINED INTO THE GERMAN POSITIONS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. FOUNTAINS OF FLAME LEAPED BUNDINGLY. YELLS AND CURSES INTERMINGLED WITH THE CONCUSSIONS...





ALL ALONG THE BRIGADE FRONT, MEN WERE BREACHING THE GERMAN DEFENCES, EITHER AS MARSHALL AND HIS LADS HAD DONE - OR WITH THE AID OF ENGINEERS ...



The Atlantic Wall



INLAND FROM BARBICAN BEACH, FEROCIOUS HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING DEVELOPED...



THE NAZIS RESISTED STUBBORNLY, FANATICALLY, BUT THERE WAS NO WITHSTANDING THE BULLDOG VALOUR OF THE ATTACKERS. THE DEFENCE BUCKLED AT LAST - AND CRACKED!



THE ENEMY'S FRONT HAD NOT BEEN OVERRUN WITHOUT FURTHER CRUEL LOSSES, THOUGH. THE BRIGADIER'S FACE TWISTED CONVULSIVELY WITH GRIEF AS HE LOOKED ABOUT HIM...



A HOLLOW GROAN DREW HIS ATTENTION TO A YOUNG SECOND-LIEUTENANT. A SINGLE GLANCE TOLD HIM THE SUBALTERN HAD NOT LONG TO LIVE...



The Atlantic Wall

OLIPHANT COMFORTED MARSHALL TILL THE PLATOON COMMANDER DREW HIS LAST BREATH. AFTER THAT, HE FLOODED TOWARDS THE VILLEBRUN ROAD, WHERE TIM BUDDEN CAUGHT UP WITH HIM...

BUDDEN, THERE'S A SPECIAL QUALITY ABOUT THE MEN IN THIS BRIGADE AN 'EXTRA SOMETHING' THAT MAKES 'EM SUPREME IN BATTLE.

FUNNY, WHEN YOU COME TO THINK OF IT, HE REALLY *DOESN'T* KNOW HE'S THE ONE WHO GIVES THE BLOKES THAT 'EXTRA SOMETHING'.



PRESENTLY, THE BRIGADIER CAUGHT SIGHT OF A COUPLE OF FAMILIAR FIGURES.

ONE, TWO, THREE—
HEAVE!





BRIGADE RESERVES APPROACHED FROM THE BEACH. WITH A NONCHALANT AIR, BRIGADIER JUMBO OLIPHANT FISHED OUT A SPARE MONOCLE, FIXED IT IN POSITION, AND SAT BACK SERENELY.

ALL RIGHT, MEN, LET'S GET ON WITH THE WAR!



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